

ACAPAA Council

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February 20, 2006

To the Asian Pacific Americans of Michigan,

This letter is an urgent invitation for you to give your opinions and comments on the most pressing issues facing the Asian Pacific American community in Michigan. Please read the following information and then send your comments as described below.

Background Information

In May, 2005, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm created the Advisory Council on Asian Pacific American Affairs (ACAPAA) per Executive Order 2005-10. The Council is charged with identifying the priority issues facing the Asian Pacific American community in Michigan and advising the Governor on those issues.

The Council has worked on this from its first meeting in August, 2005 and announced the five top priority issues in January, 2006. The details about them are outlined below. The Council is now ready to receive input and feedback from the Asian Pacific Americans in Michigan on these five issues and hear about any other pertinent issues. The Council seeks feedback in five ways:

1. Town hall meetings in Detroit tri-county, Ann Arbor, Lansing and Grand Rapids areas
2. Council website, <http://michigan.gov/mdcr/0,1607,7-138--127553--,00.html>
3. Community Organizations
4. Individuals
5. Ethnic Community Newspapers

Your comments will become an important part of a policy recommendation document we'll deliver to the Governor in May, 2006. Please use the "Comments Form" at the bottom of this letter" and return it to Frank Borja, fbborja@gmail.com, or the person who sent it to you by March 1st. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sook Wilkinson, Ph.D., Chairwoman
Governor's Advisory Council
on Asian Pacific American Affairs
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Top Five Priority Issues and Initiatives as Identified by ACAPAA

1. *Civil Rights Initiative:* To create an educational initiative to increase the awareness, education and involvement of the APA community on civil rights issues, laws and applications.

Background:

In the coming months, Michigan could face a ban on the use of affirmative action by the state in the areas of public employment, public education and public contracting if the proposed Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI) is successful in banning affirmative action from our constitution. It is important that the APA community have a dialogue on the pros and cons of affirmative action.

Sexism, racism, xenophobia continue to perpetuate a cycle of unfulfilled aspirations among APA, other people of color and women. The glass ceilings continue to be the artificial barriers that deny APA, other people of color and women the opportunity to advance within their careers. It is important for the APA community to understand its place in civil rights movement and the applicable civil rights laws.

To prevent discrimination and preserve equal opportunity, the APA community should come together to develop and sustain an APA civil rights agenda. Thus, the initiative will galvanize the APA community to have such a dialogue and begin the process of developing an APA civil rights agenda.

This initiative will help unite the APA community to develop a common strategy and goal to strengthen their voice on political and civil issues that affect the APA community.

2. *Immigration Initiative:* To educate employers and prospective and current APA workers in Michigan on basic immigration laws.

Background:

With the increasing number of Asian Pacific Americans taking residence in Michigan, they will play a vital role in contributing to the state's economy. The Advisory Council wants to develop a process for educating employers and current/prospective immigrant workers on available work visa and employment authorization options.

In light of the recent raids of Asian restaurants in Michigan, we believe this initiative is timely and necessary to ensure that employers comply with immigration laws and those employers and current/prospective workers understand their rights and obligations under the laws.

This initiative will institute training seminars for Asian immigrants by recruiting attorneys to speak about basic immigration laws to Michigan's Asian immigrant and other employers as well as prospective or current employees.

3. *Healthcare Initiative:* To create an APA Access to Healthcare Initiative to include equal access to healthcare systems, especially for those vulnerable populations such as the very young, the very old and those without health insurance.

Background:

In order to measure progress made in meeting the health care goals of HEALTHY PEOPLE 2010 in Michigan, sizeable data have been collected on most ethnic/minority populations and are available to the public. Currently, however, Michigan has very little health data describing the health status of Asian Pacific Americans in meeting the goals of Healthy People 2010. It is assumed that some of the barriers in collecting such data may be due to cultural or even language barriers between the health providers and their clients.

This initiative will encourage instituting policies within the Michigan Department of Community Health and other governmental health agencies to identify and eliminate health disparities among APA population. It will also advocate for a comprehensive culturally competent research and data collection for APAs in order to measure gaps in meeting the goals of Healthy People 2010.

4. *Education Initiative I:* To create strategies for inclusion of the APA content in Michigan pre-K to 16 curriculums.

Background:

In this global economy, children need to learn about different cultures to become better prepared to compete nationally and globally, and to collaborate and work more effectively with a diverse workforce. To ensure teaching of APA and other cultures' history and cultural heritage in K-16 public schools, we need to develop strategies with Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and university departments to identify and include key APA and other cultures' issues of historical and cultural relevance for a) Michigan Curriculum Frameworks, b) MEAP, and c) university courses.

This initiative will follow-through on some of the recommendations made by Michigan Commission on Asia in Schools.

5. *Education Initiative II:* To promote participation of the APA leadership in educational governance and professional development.

Background:

Education is one of the key ingredients in equipping the diversified workforce with the necessary tools to economic recovery. The universities are Michigan's best sources for research and development, cultural and educational programs as well as providing a well trained workforce population in which to attract new businesses to Michigan. Education

is the most effective way to help the people in Michigan to participate in the new economy.

This initiative will increase participation of the APA leadership in governance. It will also strengthen professional development for K-16 educators and increase APA enrollments in teacher education programs.

Comments Form

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Do you agree that the above five are the most important issues facing the Asian Pacific American community?

Yes () No ()

If yes, why?

If no, why not?

Comments:

Do you have specific recommendations for how to implement any of the five issues?

Would you be willing to volunteer to work with the Governor's Advisory Council on Asian Pacific American Affairs? If yes, what specifically would you like to do?

Thank you very much for your time and comments.